

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3747

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 ISLAMABAD 0663/1

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PINS, PK

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF DOMESTIC POLITICS IN PAKISTAN

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

A. DURING THE LAST THREE MONTHS OF 1975, PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO PAID INCREASING ATTENTION TO DOMESTIC POLITICS. FACED IN THE FALL WITH THE LAHORE BY-ELECTION WHICH GALVANIZED OPPOSITION FORCES AND BROUGHT G.M. KHAR TO CENTER STAGE AS A POTENTIAL THREAT TO THE PM, BHUTTO MOVED ADROITLY AND QUICKLY TO RECOUP HIS POSITION AND CONSOLIDATE HIS CONTROL.

B. THE PASSAGE OF THE FOURTH CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT SERVED TO FURTHER TIGHTEN GOVERNMENT CONTROL  
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BY RESTRICTING THE ABILITY OF THE COURTS TO DELAY

PROCEEDINGS AGAINST THOSE CHARGED BY THE GOVERNMENT. THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO TOOK STEPS TO REVITALIZE THE ENERVATED PPP PARTY STRUCTURE THROUGH REORGANIZATION TRIPS TO THE PROVINCES, AND BY DIRECTING THE PREPARATION

A NEW PARTY MANIFESTO. THE CORRUPT AND INEFFICIENT GOVERNMENT IN BALUCHISTAN WAS DISSOLVED AND PRESIDENT'S RULE IMPOSED (A MOVE SEEN PARTIALLY AS THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH THE LOW-LEVEL INSURGENCY IN THE PROVINCE), AND THE LAND REVENUE TAX ON SMALL LANDHOLDERS WAS REMOVED. IN DECEMBER THE PM ANNOUNCED SWEEPING REFORMS IN THE LABOR, LEGAL AND EDUCATIONAL SECTORS WHICH WERE GENERALLY POPULAR AND APPEALED TO A WIDE SPECTRUM OF PAKISTANIS. HE TOOK THE LONG-OVERDUE STEP OF ESTABLISHING THE POSITION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS THEREBY ENSURING GREATER COOPERATION AMONG THE THREE MILITARY SERVICES.

C. THE OPPOSITION CONTINUED IN DISARRAY THROUGH THE END OF THE YEAR AND DOES NOT POSE A THREAT TO BHUTTO'S POSITION. THE PM'S OFFER OF A DIALOGUE WAS AGAIN REJECTED, AND G.M. KHAR AND HANEEF RAMAY HAVE FADED TO NEAR ANONYMITY. ONE OF THE FEW POSITIVE NOTES FROM THE OPPOSITION WAS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY WHICH WAS FOUNDED AFTER THE SUPREME COURT UPHELD THE GOVERNMENT'S BAN ON THE NAP AND NAP OFFICE HOLDERS WERE DISQUALIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT FROM HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICE FOR FIVE YEARS. THE NDP IS LEERY OF DIRECTLY CONFRONTING THE PM, HOWEVER, AND THE OPPOSITION REMAINS DIVIDED ON MANY ISSUES, INCLUDING WHETHER TO CONTINUE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BOYCOTT, WHETHER TO PARTICIPATE IN BY-ELECTIONS, AND IS STILL RIVEN BY IDEOLOGICAL DISAGREEMENTS.

D. EVEN WITH A SPLINTERED OPPOSITION AND A POWERFUL PRIME MINISTER, ALL IS NOT WELL IN THE PAKISTAN BODY POLITIC. ALTHOUGH BHUTTO'S CONTROL IS FIRM, HIS POPULARITY IS UNDOUBTEDLY LOWER THAN IT WAS WHEN HE WAS SWEEPED TO POWER IN 1971. THERE IS POPULAR DISENCHANTMENT WITH THE ECONOMY AND HIGH PRICES, AND CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REPRESSIVE MEASURES. ALTHOUGH LATENT PROBLEMS EXIST, A CATALYST TO CAPITALIZE ON THEM AND

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THREATEN THE PM IS LACKING. BHUTTO'S SENSE OF POLITICAL SURVIVAL IS STRONG AND HIS POLITICAL ACUMEN REMAINS UNMATCHED IN THE COUNTRY. EVEN THOUGH MANY ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN PAKISTAN, THE POSSIBILITIES OF A MAJOR CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP SEEM, FOR THE MOMENT, REMOTE.

E. THE FOLLOWING ANALYSIS DRAWS ON CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR CONSTITUENT POSTS. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

2. DURING THE CLOSING MONTHS OF 1975, PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO PAID GREATER ATTENTION TO DOMESTIC POLITICS THAN HE HAD EARLIER IN THE YEAR. HE SEEMED PREOCCUPIED WITH RECOUPING HIS POSITION, WHICH MANY THOUGH HAD ERODED FOLLOWING THE WELL-PUBLICIZED BY-ELECTION IN LAHORE AND G.M. KHAR'S CHALLENGE TO HIS PREEMINENCE. HE HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN REBOUNDED FROM THAT SETBACK, HAS REAFFIRMED HIS POSITION AS THE CONSUMMATE POLITICAL MANIPULATOR IN PAKISTAN, AND HAS STRENGTHENED HIS FIRM CONTROL OVER DOMESTIC POLITICS.

3. THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS WAS AIDED BY THE PASSAGE BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN MID-NOVEMBER OF THE FOURTH CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT, A POTPOURRI OF VARIOUS CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES, SOME ANODYNE AND OTHERS WHICH AROUSED THE IRE OF THE OPPOSITION. CRITICS OF THE AMENDMENT STRENUOUSLY OBJECTED TO TWO PROVISIONS; ONE WHICH PROHIBITS COURTS FROM GRANTING THE UNIQUE PROCEDURE OF BAIL BEFORE ARREST IN PREVENTIVE DETENTION CASES, AND THE OTHER LIMITING TO 60 DAYS A HIGH COURT STAY OF IMPLEMENTATION OF A LOWER COURT ORDER. EMBASSY VIEWS THESE SPECIFIC PROVISIONS AS FURTHER MOVEMENT ON PART OF GOVERNMENT TO CIRCUMSCRIBE THE OPPOSITION AND LIMIT ITS FREEDOM OF ACTION, AND ALSO TO WARN DISSIDENT PPP MEMBERS AGAINST STRAYING TOO FAR FROM THE PARTY.

4. THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO TURNED HIS ATTENTION AT THE END OF THE YEAR TO STRENGTHENING PPP PARTY STRUCTURE. ALTHOUGH THE PARTY DOES NOT EXIST INDEPENDENTLY OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S WILL, IT IS A USEFUL ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUNCT TO HIS LEADERSHIP AND HE WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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PROBABLY CONCERNED BOTH BY EVIDENCE OF LETHARGY AND INACTIVITY IN THE PARTY APPARATUS AND POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER DEFECTIONS TO KHAR-RAMAY CAMP. PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL MUBASHIR HASSAN WAS ACTIVE AT THE END OF THE YEAR SPEAKING TO GATHERINGS OF PARTY FAITHFUL AND ANNOUNCED THAT A NEW PARTY MANIFESTO IS BEING WRITTEN SINCE, HE CLAIMED, THE PARTY HAS COMPLETELY FULFILLED ITS EARLIER MANDATE. HE ALSO STRESSED THAT "FINAL OBJECT" FOR PPP IS TO ESTABLISH "CLASSLESS AND EXPLOITATION-FREE SOCIETY". BHUTTO MADE PARTY REORGANIZATION TRIPS TO PUNJAB, SIND AND BALUCHISTAN IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER, MET PARTY WORKERS AND ISSUED ORDERS FOR RESTRUCTURING THE PPP AND CHANGING ITS LEADERSHIP IN THE PROVINCE. HE STATED THAT THE SPECIFICS OF THE PPP REORGANIZATION WOULD BE ANNOUNCED MID OR

LATE JANUARY.

5. AT THE END OF THE YEAR, THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO  
TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO BALUCHISTAN, THE MOST VOLATILE  
OF THE PROVINCES WHICH HAD A CORRUPT AND INEFFICIENT  
MINISTRY AND A CONTINUING LOW-LEVEL INSURGENCY. SOME

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 ISLAMABAD 0663/2

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OBSERVERS SAW THE UNSEASONAL INCREASE IN DISSIDENT  
ACTIVITY AS DUE TO THE GUERRILLAS' DESIRE TO  
DEMONSTRATE THEIR CONTINUING STRENGTH, A REACTION TO  
THE SUPREME COURT VALIDATION OF THE DISSOLUTION OF  
THEIR SARDAR PARTY (NAP), AND OPPOSITION TO THE FOURTH  
AMENDMENT WHICH RESTRICTED THE SCOPE FOR OPEN DISSENT.  
OTHERS SPECULATED THAT AFGHAN MATERIAL SUPPORT TO THEIR  
GUERRILLAS HAD INCREASED. THE VENALITY AND INCOMPETENCE  
OF THE HETEROGENOUS PPP MINISTRY IN QUETTA HAD BECOME

SO BLATANT AND OPPRESSIVE, IN THE VIEW OF STILL OTHERS,  
THAT BHUTTO WAS COMPELLED TO MAKE SWEEPING CHANGES.  
ON NEW YEAR'S EVE BHUTTO ANNOUNCED THE SUSPENSION OF  
THE MINISTRY AND ASSEMBLY AND THE GOVERNOR WAS EMPOWERED  
TO ADMINISTER THE STATE. BHUTTO AND THE GOP STRESSED  
THE MINISTRY'S DIFFICULTIES IN SPENDING QUICKLY, OR  
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HONESTLY, THE MASSIVE FEDERAL DEVELOPMENT OUTLAYS  
EARMARKED FOR BALUCHISTAN. THE GOVERNOR AND HIS  
ADVISOR-DESIGNATE MOHAMMAD KHAN BAROZAI (LATE OF THE  
LATE NAP), ALL PLACED GREATER EMPHASIS ON THE NEED TO  
TRY A NEW APPROACH TO THE "MISGUIDED ELEMENTS IN THE  
HILLS". WHETHER THE GOVERNOR WILL SUCCEED WHERE OTHERS  
HAVE FAILED REMAINS PROBLEMATICAL.

6. BHUTTO'S EMPHASIS ON DOMESTIC POLITICIS AND HIS  
DESIRE TO IMPLEMENT POLITICALLY POPULAR MEASURES WERE  
FURTHER PROVEN BY CONSECUTIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS OF REFORM  
MEASURES DURING LAST THREE MONTHS OF 1975. THE LAND  
REVENUE TAX ON SMALL HOLDINGS WAS ELIMINATED. ALTHOUGH  
THE FINANCIAL SAVINGS TO SMALL FARMERS ARE NEGLIGIBLE,  
THE TAX ABOLITION FREES THEM FROM THE CAPRICIOUSNESS  
AND CORRUPTION OF THOSE WHO ADMINISTER THE LAND  
REVENUE TAX. THE PM, IN LATE DECEMBER, ALSO ANNOUNCED  
SWEEPING LEGAL AND LABOR REFORMS. A NUMBER OF MEASURES  
WERE TAKN TO STREAMLINE AND MAKE MORE EFFICIENT THE  
JUDICIAL PROCESS. RETIREMENT BENEFITS FOR LABORERS  
WERE INCREASED AND A LARGER NUMBER OF WORKERS WERE  
COVERED. HE ALSO ANNOUNCED EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS  
INCLUDING THE BUILDING OF MORE HOSTELS AND THE IMPROVING  
OF STUDENT TRANSPORTATION. ALTHOUGH SOME OBSERVERS  
SAW HIS ACTIONS AS PRELUDE TO AN EARLY ELECTION, WE  
VIEW THEM AS NECESSARY FENCE-MENDING MEASURES--ALL  
GENERALL POPULAR AND BROAD ENOUGH TO APPEAL TO ALMOST  
EVERY SECTOR IN THE COUNTRY-- TO HELP CONSOLIDATE HIS  
POLITICAL HOLD.

7. BHUTTO ALSO MOVED DURING THE QUARTER TO REMEDY ONE  
OF THE MAIN CRITICISMS OF MILITARY PLANNING IN PAKISTAN--  
THE LACK OF CENTRALIZED STAFF SYSTEM TO COORDINATE  
ACTIVITIES OF THE THREE SERVICES. CRITICS OF THE PRESENT  
SYSTEM, WHEREBY EACH SERVICE ACTS WITH CONSIDERABLE  
INDEPENDENCE, HAVE ALLEGED THAT IN TIMES OF CONFLICT  
PAKISTANSEIPLF THREE SEPARATE WARS--ONE BY EACH OF  
THE SERVICES. BY ESTABLISHING POSITION OF CHAIRMAN  
OF THE JOINT CHIEFS, BHUTTO COUNTERED THAT CRITICISM  
AND HAS GIVEN AN INCENTIVE TO CONTRALIZED PLANNING,  
SO SORELY LACKING, IN THE MILITARY. SOME SEE HIS  
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WILLINGNESS TO HAVE ONE SUPREME MILITARY COMMANDER AS PROOF HE IS SECURE IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MILITARY. HOWEVER, MOST MILITARY OBSERVERS EXPECT TIKKA KHAN, A BHUTTO LOYALIST WHO IS UNIMAGINATIVE AND WHO IS NOT SEEN AS A POSSIBLE THREAT TO THE PM, TO BE NAMED TO THE POST. ALTHOUGH TIKKA IS NOT HELD IN THE HIGHEST ESTEEM BY THE MIDDLE RANKS, THE PRIME MINISTER CAN CLAIM HE HAS TAKEN A LONG OVERDUE STEP WHILE AT THE SAME TIME REMAINING REASONABLY CERTAIN THE NEW JCS CHAIRMAN WILL NOT BE A POLITICAL THREAT.

8. THE OPPOSITION CONTINUED IN DISARRAY THROUGH THE END OF THE YEAR AND DID NOT POSE A UNIFIED, VIABLE THREAT TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION. MORE CONCERNED WITH THEIR OWN PAROCHIAL GOALS, SUSPICIOUS OF COOPERATION WITH OTHERS, LACKING A UNIFYING IDEOLOGY, INTIMIDATED AND OUTMANEUVERED BY BHUTTO, AND WITHOUT ONE LEADER WHO CAN GALVANIZE THEM INTO ACTION, THEY ARE AT PRESENT A LARGELY IMPOTENT FORCE IN PAKISTANI POLITICS.

9. BHUTTO CONTINUED THE CARROT AND STICK TREATMENT WHICH HE HAS EMPLOYED SO SUCCESSFULLY IN THE PAST. HE REAFFIRMED HIS OFFER TO HOLD A DIALOGUE WITH THE OPPOSITION BUT OPPOSITION LEADERS HAVE REJECTED IT ON GROUNDS THE PM IS HYPOCRITICAL AND UNTRUSTWORTHY. AT THE SAME TIME, BHUTTO WARNS HE WILL NOT COUNTENANCE ANY OPPOSITION TACTICS WHICH THREATEN THE INTEGRITY OF PAKISTAN. HE HAS ACCUSED SOME IN THE OPPOSITION OF PURSUING POLITICS PARALLEL TO THOSE OF, IF NOT INSPIRED BY, THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT.

10. BOTH G.M. KHAR AND HANEEF RAMAY WERE SEEN BY MANY AS REAL THREATS TO THE PM AT THE TIME OF THE LAHORE BY-ELECTION AND THEY CLAIMED TO BE ABLE TO GALVANIZE A SPLINTERED OPPOSITION INTO A MEANINGFUL CHALLENGE TO THE PRIME MINISTER. BOTH HAVE SEEN THEIR FORTUNES FALL AND HAVE RECEDED INTO NEAR ANONYMITY. RAMAY WAS NAMED AS VICE PRESIDENT OF THE PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE (PML) IN CHARGE OF RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS, KHAR ALSO JOINED THE PML AND WAS APPOINTED SENIOR VP

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OF THE PARTY IN EARLY DECEMBER, CAUSING FURTHER DISSENSION WITHIN PML RANKS. RAMAY WAS RECENTLY ARRESTED

BRIEFLY ON CHARGES OF MAKING A SLANDEROUS SPEECH.  
KHAR HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH A NUMBER OF OFFENSES UNDER  
THE DEFENSE OF PAKISTAN RULES AND ALTHOUGH HE REMAINS  
FREE AND DOES ADDRESS VARIOUS PML MEETINGS, HE IS  
MUCH SUBDUED FROM THE HALCYON DAYS OF THE LAHORE  
BY-ELECTION AND OBVIOUSLY AWARE OF HIS VULNERABILITY.

11. THE OPPOSITION WAS FURTHER WEAKENED WHEN THE  
SUPREME COURT UPHELD THE GOVERNMENT'S BAN OF THE  
NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY (NAP) ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE  
NAP WAS A THREAT TO THE INTEGRITY OF PAKISTAN. THE  
NAP WAS THE MOST COHESIVE OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES  
AND ALTHOUGH ITS STRENGTH WAS LIMITED TO THE FRONTIER  
AND BALUCHISTAN, IT WAS A CONTINUAL IRRITANT TO BHUTTO  
IN THOSE TWO PROVINCES. BY SUPPORTING THE GOVERNMENT'S  
BAN ON THE PARTY, THE COURT HELPED RID THE PRIME  
MINISTER OF THIS POSSIBLE CHALLENGE TO HIS LEADERSHIP  
AND, ACCORDING TO SOME LAWYERS, MARKED ANOTHER STEP IN  
THE POLITICIZATION OF THE HIGHER JUDICIARY. THE  
DESTRUCTION OF THE NAP WAS SEALED WHEN THE GOVERNMENT  
DECLARED, AS A RESULT OF THE SUPREME COURT DECISION,  
THAT NAP "OFFICE-HOLDERS" WOULD BE DISQUALIFIED FROM  
HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICES FOR FIVE YEARS AND WOULD  
THEREFORE HAVE TO RESIGN THEIR PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL  
ASSEMBLY SEATS.

12. ONE OF THE FEW POSITIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE  
OPPOSITION DURING THE LAST THREE MONTHS OF THE YEAR  
WAS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC  
PARTY (NDP) UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF SHERBAZ MAZARI.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 ISLAMABAD 0663

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

MAZARI, A RESPECTED POLITICIAN WHO IS CONSIDERED HONEST AND UNCORRUPTIBLE, WAS ASKED BY FORMER NAP MEMBERS TO LEAD THE PARTY WHICH IS, IN MANY WAYS, THE OLD NAP UNDER A NEW LABEL. HE IS RESPECTED BY THE NAP DISTRICT-LEVEL LEADERS IN THE FRONTIER AND BALUCHISTAN (HE IS LEADER OF IMPORTANT MAZARI BALUCH TRIBE), AND HAS BEEN ABLE TO USE THE EXISTING NAP STRUCTURE TO ORGANIZE THE NDP. SOME REGARD FORMATION OF NEW PARTY AS PRIMARILY SIGNIFICANT IN THAT IT PROVIDES A MEANS WITHIN THE SYSTEM FOR DISGRUNTLED TRIBAL ELEMENTS TO EXPRESS THEIR GRIEVANCES. WERE THERE NO NDP, THE LURE OF THE HILLS WOULD BE THAT MUCH STRONGER. HOWEVER, WITH MANY NAP PARTY LEADERS STILL IN JAIL AND AWAITING TRIAL, THE DISQUALIFICATION OF  
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LEADING NAP MEMBERS FROM HOLDING OFFICE, AND HIS REALIZATION THAT NDP MANEUVERABILITY AGAINST BHUTTO IS SEVERELY CONSTRAINED, MAZARI HAS BEEN CAUTIOUS AND DELIBERATE IN ATTEMPTING TO RALLY OPPOSITION SENTIMENT AGAINST THE PRIME MINISTER.

13. DIVISIVENESS WITHIN THE OPPOSITION HAS BEEN EXACERBATED BY THE WIDE IDEOLOGICAL SPECTRUM IN ITS CAMP, FROM CONSERVATIVE RELIGIOUS PARTIES TO MORE LIBERAL GROUPINGS SUCH AS THE NDP AND THE TEHRIQ-E-ISTIQLAL. THE OPPOSITION IS STILL POSTPONING A DECISION ON WHETHER OR NOT TO CONTINUE THE BOYCOTT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, ALTHOUGH MOST MEMBERS WERE STAYING OUT WHEN THE ASSEMBLY ADJOURNED, AND ARE EQUALLY DIVIDED OVER WHETHER THEY SHOULD RESIGN FROM THE NA. THE OPPOSITION PARTIES ALSO DISAGREE OVER WHETHER THEY SHOULD CONTEST BY-ELECTIONS. ALTHOUGH ALL HAVE AGREED TO BOYCOTT ANY BY-ELECTIONS TO FILL



THE SEATS VACATED BY THE NAP IN BALUCHISTAN AND FRONTIER (BY-ELECTIONS IN THE FORMER HAVE BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL PRESIDENT'S RULE IS ENDED), THE TEHRIQ AND THE JUP HAVE SAID THEY WILL CONTEST BY-ELECTIONS ELSEWHERE WHILE OTHER PARTIES IN THE UDF ARE STILL UNDECIDED.

14. THE OPPOSITION IS ALSO SPLINTERED BY DISAGREEMENT OVER THE TACTICS TO EMPLOY IN ORDER TO OUST THE PM FROM POWER. SOME ELEMENTS FAVOR EARLY ELECTIONS WHILE OTHERS FAVOR ENCOURAGING A "MASS MOVEMENT" TO FORCE THE POLITICAL CHANGES THEY THINK NECESSARY. RECENTLY, INCREASING NUMBERS OF OPPOSITIONISTS ARE TALKING ABOUT THE NECESSITY OF ORGANIZING A POPULAR MOVEMENT WHICH WOULD GENERATE SO MUCH OPPOSITION TO BHUTTO THAT THE MILITARY WOULD DECIDE TO INTERVENE. THEY SEE THIS TACTIC AS THE ONLY WAY TO FORCE THE PM'S REMOVAL FROM THE POLITICAL SCENE AND ARE INCREASINGLY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE CHANCES FOR A PEACEFUL AND CONSTITUTIONAL TRANSFER OF POWER.

15. ALTHOUGH BHUTTO'S CONTROL OVER THE COUNTRY HAS CONTINUED TO TIGHTEN, HIS POPULARITY IS UNDOUBTEDLY CONSIDERABLY LOWER THAN IT WAS WHEN HE ASSUMED POWER  
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IN 1971. POPULARITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN EPHEMERAL FOR LEADERS IN PAKISTAN AND AS PEOPLE NOTE THAT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL GAINS EXPECTED AFTER 1971 HAVE NOT YET BEEN REALIZED, DISSATISFACTION WITH THE PM INTENSIFIES. THERE IS WIDESPREAD DISENCHANTMENT WITH THE ECONOMIC SITUATION AND RISING PRICES. SOME THOUGHTFUL CRITICS OF THE REGIME HAVE EXPRESSED GROWING CONCERN OVER WHAT THEY SEE AS INCREASINGLY REPRESSIVE MEASURES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT.

16. HOWEVER, THE OPPOSITION STILL LACKS A CATALYST, AN ISSUE OR AN INDIVIDUAL TO CAPITALIZE ON THE EXISTENCE OF LATENT PROBLEMS AND USE THEM TO THREATEN THE PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION. WITHOUT THAT KEY ELEMENT, AND WE DO NOT SEE ANY AT THIS TIME, BHUTTO'S AUTHORITY CANNOT BE SERIOUSLY CHALLENGED. THE PRIME MINISTER'S SENSE OF POLITICAL SURVIVAL IS STRONG AND HIS POLITICAL ACUMEN AND ABILITIES ARE UNMATCHED IN THE COUNTRY. ALTHOUGH MANY ARE NOT PLEASED WITH THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN PAKISTAN, THE POSSIBILITIES OF A MAJOR CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP DURING THE YEAR NOW BEGINNING SEEM REMOTE.  
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## Message Attributes

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